



## WASHINGTON REPORT

*Ed*  
*See p. 3*

Washington, May 5, 1969

WR 69-18

## THE ABM AND AMERICA'S ALLIES

"I must conclude that the Soviet Union has the capability of achieving by the mid-1970's a superiority over the presently authorized and programmed forces of the United States in all areas—offensive strategic forces, defensive strategic forces, and conventional forces."—Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird at Panama City, Fla., April 25, 1969

In declaring that the Soviet Union could seize superiority over the United States in all military fields by the mid-1970's, Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird has given the American people a grim but realistic assessment of the dangers they face. It puts in context President Nixon's determination to provide anti-missile defense for the United States.

Five years ago, the Kennedy administration gravely miscalculated when it concluded that restraint in developing new strategic weapons systems would remove any suggestion of provocation from American policy and, thereby, would

cause the USSR to refrain from weapons development. Instead of slowing down, the Soviet Union moved ahead as fast as possible in the armaments field with maximum utilization of its resources. The result of the Soviet arms push was described by Mr. Laird in his Panama City speech: "They (the Soviets) have the capability of achieving by the 1974-75 time frame a force of 2,500 intercontinental ballistic missiles in hard silos."

## U.S. Planning Error

In the 1961-68 period, the United States made the tragic mistake of foreclosing military options. For example, the United States virtually ignored the field of strategic defense, to which anti-ballistic missiles belong. Meanwhile, the Soviets proceeded with development and deployment of an ABM system. Ironically, the Soviet Union adopted an open-ended view of the world and of conflict between systems, whereas the supposedly flexible United States virtually ruled out military options such as anti-missile defense and battle-

is clear that the objectives of the defense-abolitionists dovetail with communist aims. If defense abolitionism increases, the danger for the American people could be very serious. S. K. Overbeck of Newsweek has rightly said that "if national defense has gone out of style in America, there are powers that will jump with joy."

There also are many nations that will not fail to note if the desire for peace through strength is eroded. The seriousness of the American commitment to peace and freedom has to be measured in terms of U.S. determination to maintain strategic military superiority. The enemies of peace and freedom understand nothing but military strength, the language of force. Thus an ABM is an instrument of peace, a means of effecting the kind of deterrence that prevents nuclear war.

### The U.S. Draws Away

Today, unfortunately, there is a clearly manifested weakening in free world alliances—an increasing reluctance on the part of hitherto friendly nations to line

up as closely with the U.S. as they did in the past. This is an ominous development for the American people. The drawing away reflects a lack of confidence in America and in our readiness to honor international commitments.

If free nations believe U.S. armed might is impaired, that America's strength is running down and that we no longer have the will to fight when challenged, serious fissures will open in the free world's front against Soviet expansionism. Moreover, if small nations fear that America's military strength is eroded, what is likely to be the judgment of the Soviet Union? The Soviets have a far greater capacity to gauge U.S. strength and combat readiness.

In other words, the changed strategic military balance embodies the grave danger of inviting the Soviets to take the type of risk which they have always avoided in the past. The Soviet attitude surely would be changed, however, and the war risk reduced if the United States began to deploy the anti-missile defense system that the President has said is essential to the safety of the American people.

*Anthony Harrigan*  
ANTHONY HARRIGAN  
Managing Editor

### EDITORIAL BOARD

John M. Fisher.....Editor and Publisher  
Anthony Harrigan.....Managing Editor  
Dr. James D. Atkinson.....International Politics Editor  
Dr. Lev E. Dobriansky.....Economics Editor  
William Gill.....National Editor  
Frank J. Johnson.....Foreign Editor  
Dr. Walter H. Judd.....Radio Editor  
William K. Lambie, Jr.....Associate Editor, Research Director

John F. Lewis.....Coordinating Editor, Radio Producer  
Edgar Ansel Mowrer.....News Editor  
Lee R. Pennington.....Internal Security Editor  
Dr. Herminio Portell-Vila.....Latin American Editor  
Dr. Stefan T. Possony.....Strategy and Military Affairs Editor  
Colonel Raymond S. Sleeper, USAF (Ret.).....Associate Editor, Technology Editor  
R. Adm. Chester Ward, USN (Ret.).....Law & Space Editor

### NATIONAL STRATEGY COMMITTEE

Robert W. Galvin, Chairman  
Co-Chairmen  
Admiral H. D. Felt, USN (Ret.)  
General Bernard A. Schriever, USAF (Ret.)  
Lloyd Wright  
General Paul D. Adams, USA (Ret.)  
Lieutenant General Edward M. Almond, USA (Ret.)  
Bennett Archambault  
Dr. James D. Atkinson  
Peter Bruce Clark  
Charles S. Craigmile  
Admiral Robert L. Dennison, USN (Ret.)

Henry Duque  
Patrick J. Frawley, Jr.  
Fred M. Gillies  
Vice Admiral Elton Watters Grenfell, USN (Ret.)  
General Paul D. Harkins, USA (Ret.)  
Clifford F. Hood  
James S. Kemper, Jr.  
William H. Kendall  
Vice Admiral Fitzhugh Leo, USN (Ret.)  
General Curtis E. LeMay, USAF (Ret.)  
Vice Admiral R. E. Libby, USN (Ret.)  
A. B. McKee, Jr.

Admiral Ben Moreell, USN (Ret.)  
Dr. Robert Morris  
Dr. Stefan T. Possony  
General Thomas S. Power, USAF (Ret.)  
Brig. Gen. Robert C. Richardson, USAF (Ret.)  
Vice Admiral W. A. Schoech, USN (Ret.)  
Major General Dale O. Smith, USAF (Ret.)  
Admiral Lewis L. Strauss, USN (Ret.)  
Admiral Felix B. Stump, USN (Ret.)  
Dr. Edward Teller  
Rear Admiral Chester Ward, USN (Ret.)  
General Albert C. Wedemeyer, USA (Ret.)  
Major General W. A. Worton, USMC (Ret.)

The American Security Council Washington Report is published weekly by the American Security Council Press. Annual subscription rate \$12.00. Additional copies available at 25¢ each postpaid for non-members and 10¢ each postpaid for members.

Copyright © 1969 by American Security Council. All rights reserved except that permission is granted for reproduction in whole or in part if context is preserved, credit given and two copies are forwarded to the American Security Council Executive Offices.